

# **TEMPORARY DUTY TRAVEL GUIDE**

Below are the topics addressed by the Temporary Duty Travel Guide. Questions are posed and answered provided under each topic. To view the questions and answers, click on each of the following topics:

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## **GETTING STARTED**

### **WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS TRAVEL GUIDE?**

This Travel Guide is intended to provide travelers with highlights of the "Temporary Duty" travel regulations applicable in DOL. (By the way, in the Government your business destination is called your "Temporary Duty Station" hence the travel regulations are called "Temporary Duty" regulations.) This guide should answer the majority of your travel questions but it is not a complete substitute for the full set of travel regulations. The General Services Administration, on behalf of the Government, translates Federal Travel Law into regulations and publishes those regulations in what is called the "Federal Travel Regulations" (FTR). Agencies are required to supplement the FTR with Agency specific guidance.

In the Department of Labor, Agency specific guidance on many topics is found in the "Department of Labor Management Series" or the "DLMS". In DLMS 7, Chapter 1, "Temporary Duty Travel" (TDY), DOL uses the FTR as a base and adds specific guidance for DOL employees who travel on behalf of the Department. You will find the DLMS 7, Chapter 1 on the OCFO Home Page. It has been indexed for easy access to travel topics. In addition, the use of key word search should locate all you wanted to know and more on most travel subjects. The Internet address is <http://www2.dol.gov/dol/ocfo/public/travel/main.htm>

Once you have studied this guide, keep it as a handy reference. Your suggestions on how to improve it's usefulness are welcomed. Send an E-mail to Michael Griffin or Paul Becker in the OCFO.

## **PRUDENT PERSON RULE**

### **IS THERE AN OVERALL PRINCIPLE THAT TRANSCENDS THE FEDERAL TRAVEL REGULATIONS?**

Yes, the principle is referred to in the Federal Travel Regulations as the "Prudent Person Rule". If you travel on official business, you are expected to exercise the same care in incurring expenses that a prudent person would exercise if traveling on personal business. Excess costs, circuitous routes, delays, or luxury accommodations and services unnecessary or unjustified in the performance of official business are not acceptable under this standard. Employees are responsible for excess costs and any additional expenses incurred for personal preference or convenience.

Another way of looking at this is from the perspective of a private sector employer. If you are the CEO of a company and you are about to send an employee on travel you probably would suggest to your employee that "coach" class air fare would do and, while you wouldn't suggest that your employee find a room in a flop house, you would not likely approve the Ritz either. In other words, your instruction to your employee would be to incur reasonable costs consistent with getting the job done. Federal regulations dresses this principle up some but the essence remains simple, spend the Government's money the same way that a prudent person would.

## **TRAVEL AUTHORIZATION**

### **I AM A NEW EMPLOYEE AND I HAVE BEEN ASKED TO TRAVEL ON GOVERNMENT BUSINESS. WHAT DO I DO FIRST?**

Before beginning official travel, you need official permission from your Approving Official in the form of a signed travel authorization. A travel authorization should state the

expected dates, routes and modes of transportation. Your travel authorization usually provides authorized dollar amounts for transportation, lodging (per diem), and meals and incidental expenses (M&IE). While these amounts are estimates, it is usually wise to obtain supervisory agreement if there is a need to exceed them. A travel document preparation software package, called **Travel Manager** is now available to many DOL travelers. The package includes a Travel Authorization form as well as a TDY voucher, and a local travel voucher. The package applies the government-wide travel rules and does all of the standard computations for you. You are urged to use **Travel Manager** when possible.

#### I HAVE BEEN TOLD THAT THERE ARE DIFFERENT TYPES OF TRAVEL AUTHORIZATIONS -- A SPECIFIC TRIP AUTHORIZATION AND A BLANKET AUTHORIZATION. WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE?

If your supervisor expects you to travel at least **eight** times a year, you may be placed on what is called a Limited Open (Blanket) Authorization. This type of authorization allows you to travel without further authorization under certain specified conditions (i.e., travel to specific geographical area(s), for specific purpose(s), subject to trip cost ceilings, or for specific periods of time).

There is another type of blanket authorization called an Unlimited Open (Blanket) Authorization. If your job requires you to travel at least **eight** times a year to locations throughout the country, your supervisor may elect to place you on a Unlimited Open (Blanket) Authorization. This type of authorization allows you to travel for most business situations without the need for specific authorizations. There are exceptions....see Q and A's below.

If you are not covered by a blanket authorization and are asked to travel on behalf of DOL, your supervisor will sign a specific trip travel authorization for you. A specific trip authorization allows you to take one or more specific trips on behalf of the Government. The authorization will include the specific purpose, itinerary, and estimated costs.

#### IF I AM ON A BLANKET AUTHORIZATION DO I NEED A SPECIFIC TRIP AUTHORIZATION TO TRAVEL TO CONFERENCES, MEETINGS, AND TRAINING SESSIONS?

DOL has received a waiver from GSA which allows DOL employees who are authorized to regularly travel under unlimited and limited open blanket travel authorizations to travel to conferences, meetings, and training sessions without the need of a specific trip authorization. However, the blanket authorization must cover the location of the conference, meeting, or training session. All other employees need to be authorized on a trip-by-trip basis, that is, a specific trip authorization.

## WHAT KIND OF AUTHORIZATION DO I NEED FOR FOREIGN TRAVEL?

Foreign Area travel (including the Trust Territories of the Pacific Islands) for all DOL employees is authorized on a trip-by-trip basis. This includes Canada and Mexico. Special rules apply and clearance by the head of your Agency and by the Bureau of International Labor Affairs (ILAB) is required for foreign trips. See your Servicing Finance Office and/or your ILAB contact.

## WHAT KIND OF AUTHORIZATION DO I NEED IF I AM DIRECTED TO MOVE FROM ONE DUTY STATION TO ANOTHER ON EITHER A PERMANENT OR TEMPORARY BASIS?

Relocation travel for all DOL employees is authorized on a specific trip basis. Special rules apply and because of the various special provisions relocation travel is addressed in a separate guide. See "Relocation Travel Guide for Department of Labor Employees".

## MAKING ARRANGEMENTS

### NOW THAT I HAVE A TRAVEL AUTHORIZATION, HOW DO I MAKE TRANSPORTATION AND LODGING ARRANGEMENTS?

The Government has competitively contracted with selected travel agents, designated as Travel Management Centers (TMC's), to provide travel service to Government employees. These TMC's provide a full range of services to assist you:

- ! transportation reservations and ticketing;
- ! lodging reservations;
- ! commercial auto rentals; and
- ! arranging conferences and seminars.

Check with your Servicing Finance Office for the TMC assigned to service your office.

The General Services Administration has developed a number of helpful Internet Web Pages to aid the Federal Traveler find information related to: TMCs, airline transportation, lodging, and rental cars.

The following are "links" to GSA Web Pages:

**GSA Contracted TMC** you may use:

<http://policyworks.gov/org/main/mt/homepage/mtt/perdiem/tmc.html>

**Government Contracted Airline Contracts (City-Pair):** - For each city of origin and

destination the Web Page provides GSA contracted flight availability, City-Pair Contract Rates, names of airports and airline carrier(s):

<http://policyworks.gov/org/main/mt/homepage/mtt/perdiem/tmc.html>

**Flight Schedules:** For each city of origin and destination the Web Page provides flight schedules for GSA contracted flights and other commercial flights:

<https://res.amadeus.net/pl/availability/flight.hot?LANGUAGE=GB&SITE=TPL&FCT=ABLNKENTRY>

**Value Lodging Web Site** - provides travelers with non-capacity controlled hotel room availability, safe and convenient locations, additional complimentary amenities, direct billing, and rates within per diem allowance:

<http://www.gsa.gov/regions/r9/travel/balv.htm>

**Federal Lodging Discount Directory** - US Government Employees receive special treatment at many fine hotels. This directory lists addresses, telephone and FAX numbers, discount government rates available at quality hotels in the USA and all around the world:

<http://www.idt.net/hotels/>

**U.S. Government Rental Car Agreement** - Because of this agreement travelers with a travel order or government-sponsored charge card receive superior rates when renting for official business. The agreement has many benefits other than rates, such as unlimited mileage, reduced age restriction, and collision damage waiver insurance:

<http://mtmc.army.mil/travel/car/default.htm>

Hint: If you using this document in an electronic format try clicking on the above links (blue print) and the respective Internet page may be called. If not, highlight the blue print and copy it using the “copy” command under “Edit”. Go to your Internet browser and “paste” the link to the “address” box and hit “enter.” The Internet page should be called. If all else fails type the link into your Internet browser “address” box and hit “enter.”

## CAN I MAKE ARRANGEMENTS WITH MY OWN TRAVEL AGENT?

No, Government-wide regulations require you to use travel agents under contract to GSA or DOL. Starting January 1, 2001, to implement the Hotel/Motel Fire Safety Act, as amended (see 5 U.S.C. 5707c). use of a TMC to purchase transportation services, lodging, and rental car(s) will become mandatory.

## I NEED TO BE AT MY DESTINATION MONDAY MORNING, MAY I TRAVEL ON SUNDAY?

In general, DOL policy is, when possible, your business travel should be performed during your normal duty hours. This policy applies to TDY assignments, meetings, conferences,

seminars, audits, training sessions, etc. Ideally, official travel is scheduled within the regular administrative workweek to allow late Monday morning arrivals and early departures on the last day of business travel, unless:

- Factors beyond DOL's control would preclude or cause unreasonable delays in the completion of your travel assignment if all travel were performed within the workweek. In the event such factors are involved, your supervisor/manager will, upon your request, provide you with a written explanation of the reasons for ordering the travel outside of your normal workweek.
- Scheduling of your travel by common carrier during normal duty hours would cause you an unreasonable delay in the commencement or completion of your assignment (i.e., common carrier departs 30 minutes before normal duty hours and next scheduled departure is not until one or two hours after normal duty hours begin, or common carrier arrives at the official duty station 45 minutes after normal duty hours and taking a different flight would extend the length of your assignment).
- You select, for personal reasons, a mode of travel which is more time-consuming than an available alternative. All or part of such travel will be scheduled outside the workweek as necessary for efficient completion of your assignments.

If for one of the above reasons you need to begin your travel on Sunday, you should plan to take the latest flight consistent with getting to your destination at a reasonable hour. You will be paid per diem for your Sunday travel. If you choose to depart on Friday in order to travel during your regular duty hours, per diem will be limited to that which would be payable for a Sunday departure. Additionally, if you depart on a Friday as a matter of personal choice and without supervisory approval, you may be assessed annual leave due to your absence from regularly scheduled work.

Overtime entitlement varies depending on the purpose of travel and grade. If you are FLSA nonexempt you may be entitled to overtime. Consult your Servicing Personnel Office. If you are traveling in order to participate in training, by law overtime is not paid.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

### **AM I FREE TO CHOOSE THE METHOD OF MY TRANSPORTATION WHILE TRAVELING ON GOVERNMENT BUSINESS?**

When you travel on official business your travel authorization will state the method of transportation which will result in the greatest advantage to the Government. Common carrier transportation usually is the least costly and most efficient. You may be assigned a Government-owned car or authorized to lease a vehicle when common carrier transportation is not advantageous to the Government and you need a car to get to your

temporary duty location. Use of your own car (your car is called a POV – Priately Owned Vehicle) may be approved for official travel when your supervisor concludes its use is advantageous to the Government.

If you choose to use a method of transportation other than that authorized (usually your own car in lieu of common carrier) the additional cost is your responsibility and you will need to show a comparison of actual costs and cost of the mode authorized on your travel voucher.

## **COMMON CARRIER TRANSPORTATION**

### **CAN I MAKE MY OWN AIRLINE OR TRAIN RESERVATION DIRECTLY WITH THE CARRIER?**

Yes, but with a condition. GSA has competitively bid travel routes throughout the country and abroad. Routes for which there is a contractual agreement are called "city-pair" contracts or "city-pair" rates. If there is a city-pair rate that is available, generally, you are required to purchase your ticket using that rate. In general, the city-pair rate is lower than those offered by a competitive carrier, but not always. See below. (Note: Beginning with the year 2001 you will be required to use your TMC to make all of your reservations.)

### **DO I HAVE TO USE A CITY-PAIR CONTRACT FLIGHT?**

Yes, but with a number of exceptions. A noncontract carrier may be used when:

- Space or the scheduled service of the city-pair contractor is not available in time to accomplish the purpose of your travel, or the scheduled service would require you to incur overnight lodging expense;
- The city-pair schedule will not allow you to complete most of your travel during normal duty hours;
- The cost of a non-city-pair flight is less with some strings. Promotional/restricted fares offered by noncontract carriers to the general public may be used provided you, the traveler, can meet all qualifying restrictions associated with such fares and the service provided by the noncontract carrier is equal to or better than that of the city-pair contractor with respect to en route trip times. However, discount fares (YDG and MDG) or other fares restricted to Government employees may not be used. In making your cost comparison you also need to take into account any penalty fee a carrier may impose when reservations for promotional/restricted fares are canceled or changed and added cost related extra time, lodging, meals, or ground transportation. You may not purchase a first class ticket without written

permission from your Agency Head.

- Smoking is permitted on the contract flight and the nonsmoking section of the aircraft for the contract flight is not acceptable to you, the traveler.

If you use a noncontract carrier your decision must be justified by one of the above reasons. Exceptions to the use of city-pair contract flights need to be documented on a form DL 1-2024, Request and Authorization for Exception from Standard Contract Terms for City-Pair Service or in a memorandum signed by the person who authorizes your travel. The city-pair program is the envy of many private sector corporations. Making sure that it is used according to the contractual conditions is very important to DOL and an overall great savings to your office's travel budget.

City-pair rates are not available to Government Contractors regardless of the cost savings available to the Government. This is a contractual condition of the city-pair program.

#### MAY I USE A SUPERSAVER FLIGHT?

As noted above, supersaver and other restricted fares may be used when they offer savings and the possibility of cancellation or change in schedule is slight. You need to evaluate each situation to see what is in the best interest of the Government. If you elect to use restricted fares **without supervisory approval**, you are **personally** liable for any cancellation charges. Supervisory approval **eliminates** personal liability for cancellations. Form DL 1-2024 is available to record supervisory approval or in a memorandum signed by the person who authorizes your travel.

#### I WILL BE ACCOMPANIED BY A FAMILY MEMBER ON MY GOVERNMENT SPONSORED TRAVEL. MAY I USE A CITY-PAIR CONTRACT RATE FOR MY FAMILY MEMBER?

No, you may not obtain contract city-pair fares or other Government discount fares (i.e., MDG, YDG, QDG, etc.) for spouses or dependents accompanying you while you are traveling on official Government business. You may not obtain contract city-pair fares for your own personal trips.

#### I PLAN TO COMBINE GOVERNMENT AND PERSONAL BUSINESS AND TRAVEL BY AN INDIRECT ROUTE. MAY I USE A CITY-PAIR CONTRACT RATE FOR THE INDIRECT ROUTE PORTION OF THE TRIP?

No, if you take an indirect route for personal reasons you may not use contract city-pair fares or other Government discount fares for those segments of the trip which are not directly between locations where you are required to be for official Government business.



Click [here](#) to see the questions and answers on "Vouchering" for more on combining personal travel with business travel.

## MAY I USE BUSINESS CLASS ON MY FLIGHT?

Generally, no, unless it is the only class offered by the city-pair contractor. All fares greater than coach class are considered premium and require specific approval.

## ARE THERE ANY SPECIAL CONSIDERATION WHEN FLYING OVERSEAS?

Yes, air travel outside the U.S. must be on U.S. carriers with limited exceptions. Consult with your Servicing Finance Office or ILAB on questions related to foreign travel.

## CAN I KEEP THE FREQUENT FLYER MILES I EARN WHEN I TRAVEL ON BEHALF OF THE GOVERNMENT?

No, gifts, gratuities, and benefits received from private sources incident to the performance of official business belong to the Government. This includes promotional material such as bonus flights, "friends fly free" tickets, reduced-fare coupons, cash, merchandise, gifts, and credits toward future free or reduced costs of services or goods. If you accept such promotional material, you do so on behalf of the Government and are obligated to account for it. Such material should be relinquished to your Agency Administrative Office. Government Ethics Regulations allow employees to keep some promotional material, such as pens, pencils, note pads, calendars and other items of nominal intrinsic value.

You may use frequent flyer mileage benefits to upgrade your seat class to any class other than First Class but check with your administrative office before doing so. Some DOL Agencies may require approval for you to use frequent flyer benefits to upgrade your seat class.

The Employment and Training Administration has a gainsharing program whereby frequent flyer miles you give to the Department earn you a cash award when savings are achieved. If you are an ETA employee and need more information, contact your supervisor or an ETA administrative person.

## IF I AM "BUMPED" FROM A AIRLINE FLIGHT, WHAT ARE THE TRAVEL RULES I SHOULD FOLLOW?

Airlines are required to ask for volunteers to give up their reserved seats before the airline denies boarding to any passenger with a reservation. Airlines are free to determine the amount to be paid to the volunteer. Employees who voluntarily give up their seats may retain these payments. However, you should not voluntarily give up your seat if it will interfere with the performance of your official duties. If you voluntarily give up your

reserved seat and, as a result, you incur additional travel expenses beyond those which you would have normally incurred, these additional expenses must be offset against the payment you received. If your travel is delayed during official duty hours, then you will be charged annual leave for the additional hours.

Airlines are required to pay damages in certain situations if they fail to provide confirmed reserved space. When payment of damages results from travel on official business, these penalty payments are due the Government. If you are denied confirmed reserved space, ensure that the carrier shows the "Treasurer of the United States" as payee on the compensation check and forward it to your Servicing Finance Office.

## **PRIVATELY OWNED VEHICLES**

### **I PLAN TO USE MY OWN AUTOMOBILE WHEN TRAVELING ON BEHALF OF THE GOVERNMENT. AT WHAT RATE WILL I BE REIMBURSED?**

The rate of reimbursement when you use your privately owned vehicle (POV) for Government business is dependent upon the availability of Government-owned vehicles (GOVs). The rates below are in effect as of February 14, 2000.

Rate A - When it has been determined by your supervisor/Approving Official that the use of a POV is advantageous to the Government or when there are no GOVs available, the rate is 32 ½ cents per mile for POV other than a motorcycle and 25 cents per mile for a motorcycle.

Rate B - When it has been determined by your supervisor/Approving Official that the use of a GOV is advantageous to the Government, a GOV is available and you are neither personally assigned a GOV, nor committed to the use of a GOV, and you use a POV as a matter of personal preference, the rate for all motor vehicles is 23.5 cents per mile.

Rate C - When it has been determined by your supervisor that the use of a GOV is advantageous to the Government, you are either personally assigned a GOV, or you would not normally be allowed the use of a POV (i.e., a number of GOV's are assigned to your office and if available, their use is mandatory) and you use a POV as a matter of personal preference, the rate for all motor vehicles is 10.5 cents per mile.

Current POV Rates - POV rates posted to the GSA Web Page:

<http://policyworks.gov/org/main/mt/homepage/mtt/p>

When the Government has free transportation available (i.e., shuttle bus or you can travel as a passenger in a vehicle driven by another employee, etc.) and you use a POV as a matter of personal preference, you will not be reimbursed for the use of your POV.

In addition to the above rates, if you use a POV or GOV you will be reimbursed for tolls. For POV the cost of gasoline and other normal operating expenses are presumed to be part of the above rates. When you use a GOV or rental car, the cost of gasoline and oil are reimbursable.

## I DRIVE MY CAR INTO WORK SO THAT I CAN USE IT FOR GOVERNMENT BUSINESS DURING THE MIDDLE OF THE DAY. CAN I BE REIMBURSED FOR MY EXPENSES?

When you are authorized to use your own car for Government business during the day you may be reimbursed for the use of your vehicle as well as the parking fee for that day at your official duty station. You will not be reimbursed for the cost of reporting directly to your regular place of work in the morning or when leaving for the day directly from your regular place of work. There is no exception provided when you need to drive to work in order to stay past the time that a carpool leaves.

Once you have commuted to your official duty station and you use your POV to travel to an alternative work location(s), you may be reimbursed the full cost of mileage for the trip to the alternative work locations(s) and return to the official duty station.

When you don't report to the official duty station but to one or more work locations outside the 15 mile radius of your regular place of work, you will be reimbursed based on home to home (commuting residence) mileage costs.

When you don't report to the official duty station but to one or more work locations inside the 15 mile radius of your regular place of work, you will be reimbursed commuting costs from your home to work location(s) and back to your home (including parking) less your normal commuting costs.

When the location of your first worksite is other than your official duty station (i.e., alternative work location, garage, TDY site, or parking lot where GOV's are kept, etc.), and you also work at your official duty station sometime during the day, your claim for reimbursement is reduced by your normal commuting costs, that is, you may be reimbursed commuting costs from home to the alternative work location and to the official duty station and back to your home (including parking) less your normal commuting costs.

Where the location of your last worksite is other than your official duty station, and you also worked at the official duty station sometime during the day, your claim for reimbursement is likewise reduced by your normal commuting costs.

These guidelines also apply to flexiplace arrangements. Travel costs incurred in traveling from your home (alternate work station) to your permanent duty station are generally not reimbursable.

Note: Where because of safety concerns and where air bags cannot be disabled on a Government provided vehicle, you may be authorized to use your own vehicle.

Note: When you have another Government employee(s) accompanying you in your car, you no longer are required to list the name(s) of the accompanying person(s) on your voucher.

**WHEN I AM IN TRAVEL STATUS MAY I USE A TAXI, FOR EXAMPLE, TO GO TO THE AIRPORT?**

In general you should use the least costly form of local transportation such as public transportation or airport limo. However, there may be times when it is prudent to use a taxi, for example arrival or departure late at night. Your reimbursement for the use of a taxi is limited to \$50 plus tip per trip unless a greater fare is authorized or approved as advantageous to the Government.

## **LODGING, FOOD AND MISCELLANEOUS EXPENSES**

**HOW WILL I BE REIMBURSED FOR MY LODGING AND MEALS, ETC.?**

When your official travel requires you to stay overnight, in most cases, you will be reimbursed for the actual cost of your lodging up to an amount authorized for your temporary duty location plus a set amount to cover the cost of your meals and miscellaneous expenses. This is called the "lodgings-plus" method of reimbursement or the "per diem" system. You will also be reimbursed separately as a "miscellaneous expense" for taxes associated with your lodging (on that proportion of lodging expense authorized) as well as laundry and dry cleaning expenses when you are in overnight travel for four days or more.

GSA provides a State Tax Rate table for lodging by jurisdiction. Information from this table will be useful when you plan your travel and need to include the expected cost of lodging taxes in your authorization. Lodging tax rates can be found at:

<http://policyworks.gov/org/main/mt/homepage/mtt/perdiem/taxesa-c.htm>

## **PER DIEM**

**WHAT IS PER DIEM?**

Per Diem is a term used to represent the amount the Government expects lodging, meals, and certain miscellaneous expenses to cost you each day while you are in travel status.

## HOW IS PER DIEM DETERMINED?

The General Service Administration conducts an annual survey to determine the usual lodging and meal expenses an employee traveling on Government business will likely pay in the various localities around the country. GSA then sets the "per diem" rate for each locality (and is referred to as the "locality" per diem rate). The "per diem" rate is divided into parts. The first part is the maximum lodging rate for which you will be reimbursed for an overnight stay at a hotel or motel.

The second part, called "Meals and Incidental Expenses" (M&IE), is the rate you normally will be reimbursed for meals and incidental expenses such as baggage handling, bellhops, tips, etc. Telephone calls, lodging taxes, laundry and dry cleaning (if you are in overnight travel status more than four days) and transportation related items like taxis, tolls, and parking, are itemized and claimed separately over and above per diem. The M&IE rate for the locality to which you plan to travel remains fixed whether you spend more or less for you meals and incidental expenses. Under unusual circumstances you may be authorized to travel on "actual" expenses. Click here for more information on "actual" expenses. If meals are provided by the Government at partial or no cost to you the M&IE allowance must be reduced. See "Reductions" in a subsequent question below.

## HOW MUCH WILL I BE REIMBURSED FOR MY LODGING AND MEAL EXPENSES?

The General Services Administration has prescribed maximum per diem rates within the 48 contiguous United States (CONUS) by location; these are listed on the Internet at <http://policyworks.gov/org/main/mt/homepage/mtt/perdiem/travel.shtml>

Locations not listed are at the average or below average cost and GSA sets a rate for these areas called the "CONUS" rate. The standard CONUS rate is currently \$85.00 (up to \$55.00 for lodging and \$30.00 for M&IE allowance). By the way, "CONUS" stands for 48 the contiguous United States.

Many hotels and motels offer Government rates that fit within the current per diem rate for the locality. Ask for the Government rate and be prepared to show your Government ID and a copy of your travel authorization, if requested.

There are situations where the per diem rate established for a given locality is not sufficient. The travel regulations provide for reimbursement for lodging and M&IE at higher than the GSA established rate under unusual conditions. Click here to see the questions and answers under "Actual Expenses." In addition, a premium per diem rate may be paid when a traveler is required to attend a conference and the established per diem rate is not sufficient to cover lodging expenses.

Similarly, there are situations where payment of per diem at a rate lower than the rate set by GSA is prudent. Click here to see the questions and answers under "Reduced Per Diem."

## WHERE DO I FIND THE PER DIEM RATES FOR HAWAII, PUERTO RICO, ETC., AND FOREIGN AREAS?

Per diem rates for overseas areas (Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands, Hawaii, Alaska, and US Territories) are set by the Secretary of Defense; per diem rates for foreign areas are set by the Secretary of State. Consult with your Servicing Finance Office to determine the appropriate rates. The Internet address for per diem rates is <http://policyworks.gov/org/main/mt/homepage/mtt/perdiem/travel.shtml>

## IF I AM TRAVELING BETWEEN TWO AREAS THAT HAVE DIFFERENT PER DIEM RATES WHICH ONE DO I USE?

The applicable per diem rate is the rate where your temporary duty assignment was at 12:00 midnight, and not the locality of your lodging, with the exception of en route travel. In the case of en route travel, the per diem rate is the applicable rate for the location where lodging was acquired.

## IF I STAY WITH FRIENDS OR RELATIVES, AT A SECOND RESIDENCE, OR AT THE FAMILY DOMICILE HOW IS MY REIMBURSEMENT FOR PER DIEM AFFECTED?

When you stay with friends or relatives, at a second residence, or at the family domicile, no lodging allowance will be paid unless your host is required to incur additional expenses to accommodate you. In such instances, you must substantiate the costs on the travel voucher and they must be deemed to be reasonable by the Approving Official and by the voucher auditor. Neither costs based on room rates for comparable lodging in the area, nor flat "token" amounts can be considered a reasonable basis for reimbursement of lodging costs.

You will be allowed the full allowance for M&IE for the locality unless a reduced per diem is specifically set forth on your travel authorization.

## ARE THERE OTHER CONDITIONS WHEN PER DIEM IS PAID, NOT PAID, OR PAID PARTIALLY?

Yes, they are:

Travel of less than 12 hours. If you begin and end travel within a twelve-hour period, no M&IE allowance may be paid to you.

Travel of more than 12 hours but not exceeding 24 hours. For travel of more than 12 hours but less than 24 over a one or **two** day period, you receive 3/4 M&IE allowance for the locality plus a lodging allowance if lodging was required. However, an employee on a non-standard workday (e.g., flexitime) who elects to work beyond 12 hours is not entitled to M&IE.

Full days. For each full day (12:01 a.m. through 12:00 midnight) in travel status, you receive your actual cost of lodging not to exceed the maximum allowable for lodging for the locality of the temporary duty assignment plus the M&IE allowance for the locality.

Day of Departure. On the day you depart from your official duty station to begin a temporary duty assignment, you receive the actual cost of lodging not to exceed the allowable amount for lodging for the locality of the temporary duty assignment plus 3/4 M&IE allowance for the locality.

Day of Return. On the day you return to your official duty station, you receive 3/4 M&IE allowance for the locality on which per diem was based for the previous day.

Leave. If you are in travel status and take leave, you are entitled to receive a full day of per diem for the day of leave if you worked one-half or more of the day. You are entitled to a full day of per diem for the day before and the day after leave while in travel status. If while in travel status, you take leave for a more than half of the day you are not entitled to receive per diem for that day.

Weekends. You are entitled to receive per diem for weekends and holidays if you are in travel status and work at least one-half of a day before and after the weekend or holiday.

Reductions. There is no payment for lodging unless you actually incur lodging costs. When all or part of your meals are furnished at no cost or at a reduced cost to you by the Federal Government, the applicable maximum M&IE rate is reduced. When the actual cost paid by the Government is known, the M&IE is reduced by that amount but not to exceed the amounts in the table below. When the cost paid by the Government is unknown, i.e., when meals are included in a comprehensive conference fee, or included in the tuition of training, reductions are made as follows:

M&IE RATE	\$30	\$34	\$38	\$42	\$46
Breakfast	\$ 6	\$ 7	\$ 8	\$ 9	\$ 9
Lunch	\$ 6	\$ 7	\$ 8	\$ 9	\$11
Dinner	\$16	\$18	\$20	\$22	\$24

However, in no instance should the amount you receive be reduced to the point where it would be less than the daily incidental expense allowance of \$2. The M&IE allowance is

not reduced for meals provided on airline carriers or complimentary meals provided by lodging establishments.

Lodging on a weekly or monthly basis. When you obtain lodging on a weekly or monthly basis, the daily lodging cost is computed by dividing the total lodging cost by the total number of days you actually occupy the quarters, provided you acted prudently in renting lodging by the week or month and the daily cost does not exceed the maximum allowable lodging rate for the locality of the temporary duty assignment. If the daily lodging cost exceeds the maximum allowable lodging rate, your reimbursement is limited to the maximum allowable rate.

**GIVEN ADVANCES IN TECHNOLOGY AVAILABLE TO IMPROVE MY PRODUCTIVITY WHILE ON GOVERNMENT TRAVEL, MAY I BE REIMBURSED FOR THE USE OF A MODEM, RENTAL OF A COMPUTER, CELL PHONE?**

Yes, reimbursement is permitted for use of such technology as a computer, modem, Internet, e-mail, and a cell phone while in travel status if authorized for your use by your Agency. These items are reimbursed as "Miscellaneous Expenses." However a note of caution is in order. Your Agency may have published use guidelines and your use of such technology should be authorized by your Agency.

## **ACTUAL EXPENSES**

**I WILL BE TRAVELING ON BEHALF OF THE GOVERNMENT TO AN AREA WHERE, BECAUSE OF SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES, I CAN NOT OBTAIN REASONABLE LODGING WITHIN THE "LOCALITY" PER DIEM RATE SPECIFIED BY GSA. IS THERE A WAY I CAN BE REIMBURSED FOR THE HIGHER LODGING COST I WILL INCUR?**

Yes, within limits. When lodging expenses absorb all or practically all of your applicable maximum per diem allowance, you may request reimbursement, up to 150 percent of the applicable per diem rate for the locality, on an actual expense basis. Your lodging expenses may be unusually high due to special or unusual circumstances.

Under rare circumstances you may be authorized actual expenses up to 300 percent of the applicable per diem rate for the locality. Such approval requires written justification and approval by the Assistant Secretary for Administration and Management prior to travel.

When you are required to attend a meeting, conference or training session away from your official duty station where lodging absorbs all or most of your applicable maximum per diem allowance, you may be authorized up to 125 percent of the applicable per diem rate for the locality. Your requests should be approved by your Authorizing Official prior to the commencement of travel. See DLMS 7, Chapter 1, Chapter 16 for information on conference per diem allowances.



I WILL BE TRAVELING ON BEHALF OF THE GOVERNMENT TO AN AREA WHERE, BECAUSE OF SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES, I CAN NOT OBTAIN REASONABLE LODGING WITHIN THE "CONUS" PER DIEM RATE SPECIFIED BY GSA. IS THERE A WAY I CAN BE REIMBURSED FOR THE HIGHER LODGING COST I WILL INCUR?

You may request reimbursement of actual lodging expenses in localities covered by the standard CONUS areas when all of the following conditions are met: (1) your lodging must meet or exceed \$60 per night; (2) adequate lodging at the temporary duty site (TDY) is not offered at the standard CONUS rate; and (3) you have attempted to obtain adequate lodging within a reasonable proximity to the TDY point. You may also request actual lodging expense reimbursement when the cost of lodging at the CONUS rate plus additional transportation from a remote location will exceed the lodging cost of a staying closer to your TDY location at a higher rate.

Your requests should be approved by your Approving Official prior to the commencement of travel. However, you may request approval for actual lodging expense under this provision after completion of the travel assignment by either attaching a certification or including in the comments section of the voucher circumstances which required you to obtain lodging which cost \$60 or more.

The maximum which may be requested is 1.50 times \$85 or \$127.50. A receipt for the lodging must be approved by your Approving Official, but M&IE expenses do not need to be itemized.

I WILL BE ATTENDING A CONFERENCE ON BEHALF OF THE GOVERNMENT AT A FACILITY WHERE THE COST OF LODGING IS NOT WITHIN THE "CONUS" PER DIEM RATE SPECIFIED BY GSA. IS THERE A WAY I CAN BE REIMBURSED FOR THE HIGHER LODGING COST I WILL INCUR?

While it is always desirable to obtain lodging facilities at the chosen locality per diem rate, it may not always be possible. An Agency conference organizer of a Government Conference (Senior Manager) may set a lodging reimbursement rate that exceeds the established lodging portion of the per diem rate by up to 25 percent (rounded to the next whole dollar), if necessary. An Authorizing Official may authorize up to 25 percent premium for a non-government conference for which you must attend. This will allow you to be reimbursed for your lodging expense by using the conference lodging allowance (a variation of the per diem allowance rather than the actual expense reimbursement method). The 25 percent allowance may not be applied to M&IE.

# **REDUCED PER DIEM**

**I PLAN TO STAY WITH RELATIVES RATHER THAN A HOTEL. CAN I STILL RECEIVE REIMBURSEMENT AT A REDUCED RATE WHEN MY EXPENSES ARE EXPECTED TO BE LOWER THAN NORMAL?**

Yes, a reduced per diem allowance in lieu of the maximum per diem allowance will be authorized when circumstances warrant such a reduction (i.e., lodging at family domicile, lodging with friends or relatives, special rates available for a meeting, conference, training, etc.). A reduced per diem rate must be established in advance of the travel and reflected on the travel authorization. You will receive the entire reduced per diem rate for each full day you are in travel status, without the need to itemize subsistence expenditures on your voucher or to produce receipts. For partial days you will receive 3/4 of the reduced rate or an amount determined under the lodgings-plus system as determined by your Approving Official. The reduced per diem will be determined by dividing your total estimated subsistence costs by the number of days you will receive a reduced per diem rate. This may result in your expenses for some days exceeding the per diem allowance, however, the total reimbursement should equal your total expenses for the period.

# **PAYING FOR OFFICIAL TRAVEL EXPENSES**

**HOW DO I PAY FOR MY OFFICIAL TRAVEL EXPENSES?**

If you are expected to travel more than two times during the year, a Government contractor-issued charge card will be issued to you. As a result of the enactment of the Travel and Transportation Reform Act of 1998 you are now required to use your charge card to purchase transportation, lodging, food, and other travel related services unless you do not have a charge card, a vendor does not accept your charge card, the expense item has been exempted, e.g. local transportation, or you have been exempted from mandatory use by the Assistant Secretary for Administration and Management. For more information consult with your Servicing Finance Office or DLMS 7, Chapter 1, Part 1-105. Under certain circumstances money will be advanced to you in the form of a "Travel Advance".

# **TRAVEL ADVANCE**

**WHAT IS A TRAVEL ADVANCE?**

In a broad sense, a travel advance is a loan so that you do not have to pay travel expenses out of your personal funds.

## HOW DO I GET AN ADVANCE?

If you need an advance you should use your charge card and a personal identification number (PIN) to obtain cash advances through an automated-teller-machine (ATM). If you obtain an advance through an ATM machine, the amount drawn from the ATM should represent a fair estimate of your cash needs but, in general, should not exceed \$50 a day. The ATM cash limit is \$1000. This amount is intended to provide room for overlap of withdrawals and billing cycles. See DLMS-7, Chapter 1, Part 10 for details. If you do not have a charge card you may obtain a specific trip cash advance directly from DOL. You may use form SF 1038 to request an advance from DOL.

In light of the convenience and cost effectiveness of the ATM provision, "Blanket" travel advances are no longer issued by DOL.

## HOW IS THE AMOUNT OF THE ADVANCE DETERMINED?

If you have a charge card, travel advances based on a specific trip authorization are limited to the out-of-pocket expenses shown on the authorization. These are meal and incidental expense allowances; miscellaneous transportation expenses for local transit system, taxis, parking, tolls, telephone call, etc. For use of privately-owned vehicles (POV), the variable cost rate of 9.6 cents per mile is advanced even though reimbursement, which includes depreciation, may be greater.

If you have not been issued a charge card your travel advance will be based on out-of-pocket expenses shown on the authorization plus lodging, normally up to 80 percent of the expected out of pocket expenses. If you do not have a charge card your air or rail transportation cost will be charged directly to the Government by the TMC.

If your charge card has been revoked by the contractor your travel advance is limited to M&IE (Meals and Incidental Expenses) and miscellaneous out-of-pocket expenses shown on the authorization. In cases of hardship the Assistant Secretary for Administration or designee may approve an advance sufficient to cover non-cash expenses such as lodging. See DLMS 7, Chapter 1, Part 10.

If you obtain an advance from DOL you can not use your charge card to obtain additional cash or vice versa.

## WHEN DO I HAVE TO PAY BACK MY TRAVEL ADVANCE?

If you obtained an advance through an ATM machine, the amount drawn from the ATM together with a service charge will appear on your regular monthly statement. You will be reimbursed for the service charge (assessed by the charge card company and the ATM bank) provided you have no other advance from the Government. If you submit a timely

request for reimbursement, called a travel voucher, you should be reimbursed for the expenses charged to your charge card before your charge card bill is due.

Travel advances provided by DOL for a specific trip are liquidated at the time the travel voucher is processed. Excessive or long held advances may be considered a taxable benefit by the Internal Revenue Service.

## **CHARGE CARDS**

### **HOW DO I PAY FOR MY AIRLINE OR RAIL TICKET?**

If you have a charge card, use it to purchase your air or rail transportation. Travel Management Centers (TMC) are required to request credit card information when you make a reservation. Your charge card will enable you to purchase transportation tickets from any competitively contracted TMC.

You may also obtain city-pair tickets directly from a carrier by using your charge card.

If you do not have a charge card, you are limited to designated TMCs where prior administrative arrangements have been made to charge the cost of your ticket directly to DOL. Inquire at your Administrative Office to get the name, location, and phone number of your designated TMC.

You may not use your own personal credit card to purchase air or rail transportation.

### **AM I REQUIRED TO USE MY CHARGE CARD TO PURCHASE TRANSPORTATION, LODGING, AND MEALS?**

You are required to use your charge card to purchase all official travel related expenses with some exceptions, such as when a vendor does not accept the government contractor-issued travel card. Likewise some classes of services don't lend themselves to the use of the card, such as laundry/dry cleaning; parking; local transportation; taxi; tips; meals when the use of the travel charge card is impractical, e.g., group meals (where individual checks are not provided); and phone calls when a government calling card is available to the traveler

There are some employees or groups of employees who are excepted from the required use of the charge card, for example: employees who do not have a government contractor-issued travel charge card because it has been canceled, an employee who is a new appointee and has yet to be issued a card, employees who are not expected to travel more than two times a year, and employees who have otherwise been exempted by the Assistant Secretary for Administration and Management for the Department of Labor

## **WHAT IF I INADVERTENTLY FORGET TO USE MY CARD FOR A TRAVEL EXPENSE?**

Your Approving Official has authority to grant a waiver for inadvertent non-use of the card except for common carrier transportation expenses. Your Approving Official also has authority to grant a trip-by trip waiver, for example, if you are assigned to do undercover work where use of the card would lead to your disclosure.

## **WHAT IS THE ADVANTAGE TO ME TO USE THE CHARGE CARD FOR ALL OF MY TRAVEL EXPENSES?**

There are several benefits for using your charge card for all travel expenditures. There are no interest accruals or service charges connected with use of your charge card.

The charge card company provides insurance benefits when you use your card to purchase transportation. Coverage for accidental death is \$350,000 and for loss of luggage the coverage is up to \$2,500.

Another advantage of using your charge card is, should you lose a required receipt, the voucher examiner can confirm the existence of your expenditure through charge card company furnished records.

## **SINCE IT IS ADVANTAGEOUS FOR ME TO USE MY CHARGE CARD FOR OFFICIAL TRAVEL EXPENSES MAY I USE THE CARD FOR PERSONAL EXPENSES?**

No, the card is available through a contract between GSA and the charge card company and the provisions of that contract limit the use of the card to official travel expenses. Your card may be canceled if it is improperly used, i.e., purchase of personal items, excessive cash draws, etc., and you may be subject to disciplinary action by your Agency.

## **WHAT HAPPENS IF I FAIL TO PAY MY CHARGE CARD BILL TIMELY?**

The Department of Labor, if requested by the charge card company, may collect undisputed delinquent amounts owed by you through salary offset provisions. There are due process protections and appeal procedures to protect your rights. See DLMS 7, Chapter 1, Part 13 for details.

# **TELEPHONE CALLS**

## **HOW DO I PAY FOR A PHONE CALL WHILE ON GOVERNMENT TRAVEL?**

You should use the Federal Telecommunications System (FTS) to conduct official business, when available. If you expect to travel frequently you should request a telephone charge card. These cards, available from your administrative services officer, provide FTS

service virtually anywhere in the U.S. at considerable savings from commercial rates. Your official calls made commercially may be reimbursed when the FTS is not available.

Your Agency may authorize you to use a Cell Phone based on efficiency considerations as well as travel expenses related to electronic transmission, such as modem connection charges for connection to the Internet and use of e-mail for official business. Check with your Agency before incurring such expenses.

## **I NEED TO CALL HOME TO INFORM MY FAMILY OF A CHANGE IN TRAVEL PLANS. WILL DOL PAY FOR THIS CALL?**

Yes, certain calls home while in travel status are considered official business. If your trip is scheduled for more than one night, you may place a brief call each day to your home or other location (for example, to juvenile children living elsewhere) within the local commuting area of your official duty station. When a phone call home is made commercially and not made on the FTS, reimbursement is limited to five dollars including taxes and any access charges. Reimbursement of calls home from outside CONUS are also limited to five dollars per day; however, in recognition that international calls involve a variety of special circumstances, travelers are allowed to combine their daily entitlement provided the total reimbursement claimed does not exceed \$35 in any week.

## **VOUCHERING**

### **HOW DO I GET REIMBURSED FOR MY TRAVEL EXPENSES?**

Once you have completed your travel assignment and you want to be reimbursed, you complete a "Travel Voucher" (form SF 1012). Your supervisor/manager has 7 days to review your receipts and approve your expenses/voucher. If your voucher is not proper your voucher will be returned to you. Once your supervisor/manager has approved your voucher, it will be forwarded to your Servicing Finance Office. If the Finance Office audits your voucher and proposes to exclude payment for a particular line item, the Finance Office will still pay the undisputed amount of your voucher. Vouchers that are significantly in error will be returned.

If you traveled under a specific trip authorization, you are expected to submit your voucher within 5 working days of the conclusion of your travel. If you traveled under a blanket authorization you should prepare monthly vouchers to be submitted no later than the 5th working day of each month. If you traveled under a specific travel authorization and received a cash advance from DOL you will need to offset the amount claimed by the amount of the travel advance you received or, if your expenditures did not require the use of all of the travel advance, you will need to write a check payable to the "Department of Labor" for the difference.

If you are covered by a “blanket” authorization and incur significant travel expenses during the month you may wish to voucher more frequently. When traveling overseas and the cost of your airfare is significant you may wish to voucher for the airfare portion of your expenses after the cost of your airfare has been charged but before your trip begins.

If you received a travel advance and fail to submit your travel voucher timely, you may incur a tax liability. The Internal Revenue Service considers excessive, non-interest bearing advances from employers to be a taxable benefit.

## WHAT RECEIPTS DO I NEED TO KEEP?

Receipts for all lodging and any claim of \$75.00 or more must be reviewed by the person who approves your travel voucher. (You may be asked to obtain and provide receipts for other travel expenses of less than \$75.00. In such cases the request will be made in advance of your travel.) Once your Approving Official has reviewed, approved and signed your voucher, required receipts supporting your voucher claim may either be attached to your voucher and forwarded to your Servicing Finance Office or, if electronic processing (Travel Manager’s routing and forwarding) feature is being used, receipts will be maintained by the Approving Official.

## HOW DO I PREPARE A TRAVEL VOUCHER?

The first time you complete a travel voucher it is best to ask for help from either an experienced traveler, your office's administrative staff, or a voucher examiner located in your Servicing Finance Office. The following is a check list you may use to help you complete your voucher. It is not intended to be an all inclusive instruction.

**FIRST PAGE OF THE VOUCHER: DID YOU:**

- ☐ Record identifying information and indicate purpose of travel?
- ☐ Liquidate any travel advance with the amount claimed or personal check? (specific trip)
- ☐ Use a City-Pair contract carrier? (If no, DL 1-2024 or a memorandum must show approved alternate carrier and be shown on voucher.)
- ☐ Use a government charge card to purchase transportation? (If no, note on voucher.)
- ☐ Record transportation and accounting information correctly? See you Administrative Office support staff to show you how to complete this section.
- ☐ Travel using the itinerary and authorized means of transportation? (If no, a comparative cost voucher must be prepared.)
- ☐ Sign and date the voucher and enter proper total claimed?

**SUBSEQUENT PAGES OF THE VOUCHER: DID YOU:**

- ☐ Identify all dates and locations of TDY for each day in travel status? Time of departure and arrival are not needed but you may include them if it clarifies your claim.
- ☐ Provide clear descriptions and other explanations of expenses?
- ☐ Record lodging at the cost incurred in column (i)?
- ☐ Record the lower of actual lodging expenses, or maximum GSA rate authorized in column (m) when the lodging cost exceeded the GSA rate?
- ☐ Pay more than the GSA authorized lodging rate? If so, was actual subsistence authorized? (up to 150% of the GSA rate) For Actual Expenses either attach a memorandum signed by the Approving Official to explain the reason or include the reason in the comment section of a Travel Manager prepared voucher.
- ☐ Record M&IE at the correct rate?
- ☐ Use a POV? Were the appropriate authorized rates used?
- ☐ Itemize the costs of miscellaneous items such as lodging taxes, laundry and dry cleaning (if in travel for four days or more), road tolls, business calls, calls to home (not to exceed \$5.00 a day), etc.?



- [ ] Record TMC Transaction Fees as a transportation expense?
- [ ] Use an ATM machine to obtain an advance? Are charge card company and bank fees (if any) recorded? (ATM withdrawal is limited to actual out-of-pocket expenses not to exceed \$50.00 a day if the employee has no other advance. Fee reimbursement is limited accordingly.)
- [ ] Provide all transportation, lodging, and other receipts for an expense of \$75.00 or more?
- [ ] Total the voucher correctly?

M&IE rates are:

3/4 of the applicable M&IE rate for:

- \* First and last day of travel that includes an overnight stay.
- \* Travel between 12 and 24 hours even if the trip covered parts of two days. If you business travel ends after midnight you are not entitled to another day of per diem.

When the full M&IE rate is: \$30.00 \$34.00 \$38.00 \$42.00 \$46.00

The 3/4 M&IE rate is: \$22.50 \$25.50 \$28.50 \$31.50 \$34.50

Full M&IE rate for full days of travel other than first and last day of travel.

Note: When meals are provided at no cost to the traveler the above M&IE rates are reduced accordingly. However, A meal provided by a common carrier or a complimentary meal provided by a hotel/motel does not reduce per diem reimbursement.

POV rates as of January 14, 2000 used to compute the mileage allowance are:

32.5 cents per mile when the use of a POV is advantageous to the Government or when there are no GOVs available.

23.5 cents per mile when the use of a GOV is advantageous to the Government, a GOV is available and the employee is neither personally assigned a GOV, nor committed to the use of a GOV, and the employee uses a POV as a matter of personal preference.

10.5 cents per mile when the use of a GOV is advantageous to the Government, the employee is either personally assigned a GOV, or would not normally be allowed the use of a POV (i.e., a number of GOVs are assigned to the office and, if available, their use is mandatory) and the employee uses a POV as a matter of personal preference.

No reimbursement is due when the Government has free transportation available (i.e., shuttle bus, the employee can travel as a passenger in a vehicle driven by another employee, etc.) and the employee uses a POV as a matter of personal preference.

**IN THIS AGE OF TECHNOLOGY DOES DOL PROVIDE PC BASED SOFTWARE TO HELP ME COMPLETE MY TRAVEL VOUCHER?**

Yes, DOL has adopted a PC-based travel management system called Travel Manager (TM). If you have access to TM, you are encouraged, but not required, to use the software to prepare your travel voucher. However, if you use TM, you may receive a more timely reimbursement because the voucher is easier to process. Currently DOL's policy is to pay your voucher within 20 workdays, but when use of TM's electronic processing feature climbs to 50 percent, you will be reimbursed in 10 work days or less.

**I COMBINED PERSONAL TRAVEL WITH BUSINESS TRAVEL. HOW DO I ACCOUNT FOR THIS ON MY VOUCHER.**

First, the general rule is that the DOL pays only for the business expenses and you pay for personal expenses. Second, you are required to charge the least cost to the DOL. For example, if you were authorized lodging but you stayed with family or friends you can not charge the alternative commercial lodging rate to DOL.

When you combine personal travel with business travel you must complete two vouchers. One voucher is prepared on the basis of how you actually traveled including the personal travel. A second voucher is prepared on the basis of the itinerary contained on your authorization. In the case of a blanket authorization, reimbursement will be limited to the cost had you traveled by the mode of transportation authorized over the usually traveled route plus lodging and miscellaneous expenses. DOL will reimburse you for the lesser of the total of the two vouchers.

While doing "cost comparative" vouchers may be routine for seasoned travelers, it is wise to ask for help from your Servicing Finance Office the first time through.

If you extend your business travel for personal reasons you need to charge leave for the extra time. If you, for personal reasons, do not return to your duty station on the day specified on your travel authorization, per diem ends with the time you are authorized to end your business travel.

**I TRAVELED LOCALLY AND DID NOT STAY OVERNIGHT. DO I HAVE TO COMPLETE A TDY TRAVEL VOUCHER IN ORDER TO BE REIMBURSED?**

No, the primary form for claiming reimbursement for local transportation is the "Claim for Reimbursement for Expenditures on Official Business" form (SF 1164).

# VOUCHER PAYMENT

## HOW SOON CAN I EXPECT TO BE PAID FOR MY TRAVEL EXPENSES?

The Department of Labor's standard is to reimburse your travel expenses within 20 work days of receipt of your proper voucher by your Approving Official, i.e., in most cases your supervisor. The standard set by the Federal Travel Regulations (FTR) is to pay all proper vouchers within 30 days. As a result of the enactment of the Travel and Transportation Reform Act of 1998 if DOL takes more than 30 days to reimburse your expenses after your Approving Official receives your properly prepared voucher, you are entitled to an interest payment. The calculation used is the same as that required under the Prompt Pay Act. See DLMS 7, Chapter 1, part 11.6.

## WHAT OBLIGATION DO I HAVE TO SUBMIT MY TRAVEL VOUCHERS TIMELY?

You have an obligation to submit your travel vouchers on a timely basis. After you return from a specific trip you need to submit a travel voucher to your Approving Official within 5 working days.

If you travel under a blanket authorization you will need to submit your travel voucher for the preceding month's travel to your Approving Official no later than the 5th working day of the current month with a copy of the travel authorization(s) and all required receipts related to travel attached to the voucher.

## HOW WILL I BE REIMBURSED?

If you have a bank account, payment will be transferred to your account by Electronic Fund Transfer (EFT). If you certify that you do not have a bank account you will be sent a paper check.

## CAN I HAVE MY TRAVEL REIMBURSEMENT DEPOSITED INTO AN ACCOUNT DIFFERENT FROM THE ACCOUNT TO WHICH MY SALARY CHECK IS DEPOSITED?

Yes, normally your reimbursement will be sent to the same bank account to which your salary payment is sent. DOL can send your travel reimbursement to a bank account other than the account to which your salary payment is sent. You must request this service by completing the Direct Deposit Sign-up Form, SF 1199A, or Treasury Form FMS 2231-FastStart Direct Deposit Form and sending it to your Servicing Finance Office. Your travel reimbursements will continue to be sent to this secondary account until you specifically request a change of accounts.

## HOW SOON DO I HAVE TO PAY MY CHARGE CARD BILL?

Your charge card bill is payable upon receipt with an accepted grace period of 25 days. However, should you lapse that time by a day or two there is no interest or service charge penalty. You are considered delinquent if your charge card bill is not paid before 60 days and you run the risk of the card being canceled by the charge card company. Once a card is canceled and you are required to travel as a condition of your continued employment, cash travel advances are limited and, until you are reimbursed, some of your travel expenses such as the cost of lodging will come out of your own pocket.

Like all credit card companies the charge card company bills on a predetermined monthly cycle. In order to minimize the possibility that your monthly statement will reflect transportation charges before you receive reimbursement for your trip expenses, is a good idea not to pick up your tickets from your TMC until two days before your trip begins. Your charge card account is charged when you have your tickets "E" ticketed or you pick up your tickets.

## HOTEL AND MOTEL FIRE SAFETY ACT

I UNDERSTAND THAT I SHOULD STAY IN FIRE SAFE LODGING. WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?

The Hotel and Motel Fire Safety Act of 1990, Public Law 101-391, encourages official travelers to stay in properties that have smoke detectors and fire sprinklers, unless the property has three or fewer floors. A National list of properties is maintained and published in the Federal Register by the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Hotel-Motel National Master List: <http://www.usfa.fema.gov/hotel/index>

Only those properties listed in the Federal Register or those having three floors or fewer are published in the Federal Travel Directory.

## TAX EXEMPTION

I UNDERSTAND THAT SOME JURISDICTIONS DO NOT CHARGE SALES OR OCCUPANCY TAXES TO OFFICIAL GOVERNMENT TRAVELERS. HOW DO I KNOW WHICH JURISDICTIONS?

A few State and local jurisdictions provide for tax exemption by Federal employees on official travel. The current State Tax Exemption Listing and Forms as well as the procedure required can be found in

<http://policyworks.gov/org/main/mt/homepage/mtt/perdiem/StTaxexemp.shtml>

Each jurisdiction has its own form or method of claiming tax exemption. As of publication of this training guide, the following jurisdictions offer tax exemption:

Concord, CA	Special Form* and ID
Long Beach, CA	Special Form* and TA
Los Angeles, CA	American Express
Millbrae, CA	Special Form* and ID
County of Monterey, CA	Special Form* and ID
County of Orange, CA	Special Form* and ID
Oxnard, CA	American Express and ID
San Bruno, CA	Special Form* and ID
City/County of San Francisco, CA	American Express
San Jose, CA	Special Form* and ID
Seaside, CA	Special Form* and ID
Ventura, CA	Special Form* and ID
Oklahoma City, OK	Special Form* and TA
Tulsa, OK	Travel Authorization
Portland, OR	Travel Authorization or Letter
County of Washington, OR	Special Form and TA
State of Delaware	Special Form
State of Florida	Travel Authorization
State of New York	Special Form
State of Pennsylvania	Special Form
State of Texas	Special Form and ID

\*Indicates that form is available from lodging establishment. In most cases your office does not maintain copies of these forms.

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

### **WHERE CAN I FIND MORE INFORMATION?**

At the beginning of this guide you were introduced to DLMS 7, Chapter 1, Temporary Duty Travel. This chapter can be accessed from the OCFO Home Page. The Internet address is <http://www2.dol.gov/dol/ocfo/public/travel/main.htm>

The General Services Administration has developed a number of helpful Internet Web Pages to aid the Federal Traveler. The following Web Page is the Federal Traveler Quick Reference Guide (Index of Services). Most of the Links provided in this document are

listed in this guide: <http://policyworks.gov/org/main/mt/homepage/mtt/quickref.shtml>

The U.S. Department of State's Maximum Travel Per Diem Allowance for Foreign Areas, which includes the Department of Defense bulletin containing per diem rates for non-foreign non-CONUS areas, is available from the GPO. The Internet address for these per diem rates is <http://www.state.gov/www/perdiems/index.html>

Federal Travel Regulations are published as 41 CFR 301-304 and may be found at: <http://policyworks.gov/org/main/mt/homepage/mtt/FTR/FTRHP.shtml>

The Department of Labor has issued the following to provide more detailed or specialized guidance:

- Long-Term Temporary Duty Guide for DOL Employees
- Guide to Alternative Travel
- Conference Planning Checklist
- Relocation Travel Guide for DOL Employees

## WHERE AND WHO DO I TALK TO IN MY SERVICING FINANCE OFFICE?

The following table provides the location, address, and contact in each Servicing Finance Office in the National Office, Region, and the Mine Safety Health Administration (MSHA). MSHA is the only Agency within the Department who processes all of the travel authorizations and vouchers for their Agency's staff.

LOCATION/ AGENCY	ADDRESS	CONTACT
National Office	Business Operations Center, Francis Perkins Building.	Frank Rogers Room S5520
Boston Region	JFK Federal Building Boston, MA 02203	Lou LoPresti
New York Region	201 Varick Street New York, NY 10036	Franklin Nieves
Philadelphia Region	The Curtis Center 170 S. Independence Mall West Philadelphia, PA 19106-3305	Stephanie Sheard Hamilton Suite 600 East
Atlanta Region	61 Forsyth Street, S.W. Atlanta, GA 30303	Sherry Johnson Room 6B25
Chicago Region	230 S. Dearborn St. Chicago, IL 60604	Robert Flannery 10th Floor
Kansas City Region	1100 Main Kansas City, MO 64106	Sandy Sanders Suite 850
Denver Region	1999 Broadway Denver, CO 80202	Joanne Duvall Suite 1660
Dallas Region	525 Griffin Street Dallas, TX 75202	Patrick Smith Room 737
San Francisco Region	71 Stevenson Street San Francisco, CA 94105	Paul Cardenas 5th Floor
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